

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/726,796

Examiner

Lee Lum

Applicant(s)

PIERCE, WILLIAM M.

Art Unit

3611

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 12/30/04.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-7 and 10-18.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 9/1/04, 12/2/03 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☐ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An Amendment was filed 12/30/04 in which Claims 8, 9, 13, 19 and 20 were also cancelled.

2. Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a phone interview with W. Mason on 1/28/05:

in Claim 1, line 2 – after “coupling”, add --- comprising a ball socket, ---,
line 11 – replace “trailer coupling” with --- ball socket ---,

in Claim 7, line 5 – after “coupling” (1st occurrence), add --- comprising a ball socket, ---,
line 13 – replace “trailer coupling” with --- ball socket ---,

in Claim 12, line 2 – after “coupling”, add --- comprising a ball socket, ---,
line 13 – replace “trailer coupling” with --- ball socket ---.

3. **Claims 1-7 and 10-18 are allowable** because prior art does not disclose a hitch-aligning system attachable to a trailer that includes a coupling, comprising a ball socket, the system comprising, *inter alia*,

an elongated plate attachable to the trailer,
a cable winch attachable adjacent one end of the plate, and a cable attachment point on the other end,

a cable with one end connected to the winch, and the second end attachable to the attachment point,

whereby the attachment point, and a point where the cable departs the winch, are equidistantly separated from the trailer's centerline by a distance that is at least a multiple larger than the ball socket, to cause a triangulation action that aligns the trailer coupling with the towing vehicle's hitch.

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4. Communication with USPTO/Examiner

Any inquiry concerning this communication, or others, should be directed to Ms. Lum at 571 272-6649, M-Th, 9-6. . If attempts to reach the examiner are unsuccessful, her supervisor, Ms. Lesley Morris is at 571 272-6651. Our fax number is 703 872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for unpublished applications: private PAIR only, for published applications: private or public PAIR. For more information re PAIR: <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Questions re private PAIR: contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866 217-9197.



LESLEY D. MORRIS
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600

Ms. Lee S. Lum
Examiner
2/2/05

